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# I. THE OLDEST MONUMENTS

OF THE

## FRENCH LANGUAGE

(THE STRASBURG OATHS, THE PROSE OF ST EULALIE,  
THE PASSION OF CHRIST, THE LIFE OF ST LEGER)

## II. THE LIFE OF SAINT ALEXIS

TRANSLATED  
WITH NOTES

**Oxford:**  
JOSEPH THORNTON & SON, 11 BROAD STREET.

**London:**  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., LIMITED.

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## NOTE.

These translations make no claim whatever to any literary merit. They are an attempt to give an intelligible account (as far as is practicable) of every word in the several texts. Purely verbatim renderings have been avoided only where they might mislead; in such cases the absolutely literal sense has been given in a footnote. It has not, of course, been always possible to render the particles *si* and *en*. For the oldest monuments the MS. readings have been strictly adhered to except where they yield no good sense; deviations are fully recorded in the footnotes. The translation of the Life of Saint Alexis is especially designed to meet the needs of students reading an eclectic text (such as that of Gaston Paris) and desiring at the same time to take account of important variations in the MSS.

Square brackets [] enclose words supplied in order to make complete sense; round brackets ( ) enclose words which, while representing the French idiom, are redundant in English.





## THE STRASBURG OATHS.

*Louis, since he was the elder, was the first to swear that he would henceforth keep these things :*

For love of God and for safety of the christian people and our common [safety], from this day forward, as far as God grants me to know and to be able, I will so support this my brother Charles, both in aid and in everything, as one ought by right to support one's brother, provided that he does to me likewise : and I will never take up any treaty with Lothair, which, with my consent, shall be injurious to this my brother Charles.

*When Louis had finished this, Charles thus swore the same words in the German tongue : [the same oath follows in Old High German].*

*Moreover the oath which the people of both of them each swore in their own language, is as follows in the Romance tongue :*

If Louis keeps the oath which he swore to his brother Charles, and Charles my lord on his side does not keep it\* (for himself), if I cannot deter him therefrom, I will not be of any help to him in that† against Louis, neither I nor any whom I can deter therefrom.

*And in the German tongue : [the same in Old High German with the necessary change of names].*

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\*MS. *n[on] lostanit*, i.e. *non lo stanit*; emendations are :—*non lo suon tint* 'does not keep his'; *lo suon fraint* 'breaks his.'

†*tiu*—Latin *ibi*.

## THE PROSE OF ST. EULALIE.

1 A good maiden was Eulalie; a fair body she had, a fairer soul.

2 The enemies of God desired to overcome her, desired to make her serve the devil.

3 She does not listen to the evil counsellors, that she should deny God who dwells up in heaven,

4 either for gold or silver or adornments, for royal threat or entreaty;

5 Nothing could ever make her bend [so that] the maiden should not love the service of God.

6 And therefore she was brought before Maximian, who was then king over the pagans in those days.

7 He begs her—for which she cares not at all—that she should forsake the christian name.

8 She gathers together her energy\*; rather would she endure tortures

9 than lose her maidenhood. Therefore she died most honourably.

10 Into the fire they threw her, that she may burn forthwith. She had no sins, therefore she was not consumed.†

11 The pagan king was unwilling to trust to that, he bade [them] cut off her head with a sword.

12 The maiden did not resist this thing; she desires to leave the world; so Christ commands.

13 In the form of a dove she flew to heaven. Let us all pray that she may deign to pray for us,

14 That Christ might have mercy on us after death and let us come to him by his clemency.

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\*MS. *lo suon element*; the meaning of *element* is uncertain; some read *lo suon e la ment* 'voice and mind.' †did not cook herself.



## THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

1 Now I tell you the true story of Jesus Christ's passion. I desire to recall his sufferings by which he has saved this whole world.

2 Thirty-three years and somewhat more after he took flesh he was on the earth. Through all he acted as true God, through all he suffered as human man.

3 No sin did he ever do ; by our very own he was slain. His death gives us life ; his passion redeemed us all.

4 When his passion approached,—that was our salvation,—he desires to come near to the city. Sufferings he endured for us exceeding great.

5 When he arrived at Bethphage—it is a town beneath Mount Olivet—he sent two of his [disciples] before, [and] bade them bring an ass to him.

6 When this ass was brought, they adorned him well with their cloaks : with their cloaks, with their clothes they prepare for him [a place] where he sat.

7 In his great humility Jesus, the great king, mounted up, even as prophets long days before had sung of Jesus Christ.

8 Some days before this was done, Jesus raised Lazarus, who had lain all stinking four days in the grave.

9 When all the people heard of this, that Jesus comes, the mighty king, who makes ever the dead to live again, they went forth to meet him with great honour.

10 Some take branches of the palms, some the boughs of the olives, to meet the king who made the heavens ; the people joyful went forth that day.

11 They sing both great and small: "O son of David! O son of David!" Cloths, clothes, cloaks, palm-branches they spread at his feet.

12 A great multitude behind, a great one in front: great and small go praising God; above all, little children go continually shouting hosanna.

13 When he came near to the city and he saw it and looked upon it, from his pitying heart he sighed deeply, he wept sore with his sacred eyes.

14 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, woe is thee," said he, "for thy sins! Thou canst not think, thou wilt not think of it, thy great pride does not permit it thee.\*

15 "The years will come, the days will come, that thy enemies will lay siege to thee. They will encamp all around thee and will raze [thee] to the ground.

16 "Thy children that are in thee, they will slay with evil torments; in thy fair walls, in thy houses they will not leave [one] stone upon another.

17 "Thy people captive will be led away with torments through all nations; for I made thee [and] thou knewest me not; I came to save thee [and] thou receivedst me not."

18 When he had spoken and predicted this, he entered forthwith into the temple of God; the merchants that he found within, he cast them out with great severity.

19 He showed his mind strongly, so that great fear took hold of the Jews; with a double cord he goes striking them, he goes destroying all their merchandise.

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\*to for ti o—Latin *tibi hoc*.



20 The wicked Jews, when they saw it, within their hearts have great ill-will; by evil counsels they go seeking how they may betray our Lord.

21 The wicked Judas Iscariot came to the Jews in secret: "What will ye give me for it? I will betray\* him to you, I will fulfil\* your desires."

22 Thirty pence then they promised him for it, that he should betray his good Lord to them†; so dear a merchandise is sold so cheaply. There was never man who heard [tell of] it again.

23 And on that day that they call Passover, when Jesus had made the supper, he got up from the pious meal [and] washed the feet of his disciples.‡

24 And by the bread and by the wine he committed to them a mighty sacrament to call to mind his passion, which he bade be done by all.

25 With blessed bread and wine he fed all his disciples, excepting Judas Iscariot, whose body a sop swelled.

26 Judas, when he had eaten the sop, feels a devil within his throat; straightway he rises from the pious meal [and] goes to relate it all to the Jews.

27 The good Jesus in his pity began to speak most sweetly; upon his breast he caused to recline saint John, his dear friend.

28 At that supper he made a discourse; he who does not know it never heard the like. He strengthens well all his disciples against the afflictions that they have to suffer.

29 Then he foretold to saint Peter that he will deny him that night. Peter firmly promises [that] he will not desert him for death itself.

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\*read *tradrai...ademplirai* for MS. *tradran...adempliran*.  
†read *lor* for MS. *lo*. ‡faithful ones

30 Christ Jesus then rises ; to Gethsemane, [which] is a town, he went forth\* ; he bids all his disciples sit down, [and] went forward alone to pray.

31 Great was the sorrow, great the grief, so that they all fell asleep forthwith. Jesus, when he came, awoke them, [and] bade them all pray well.

32 And then, when he went to pray, he sweated (then) so great a sweat, that like blood the sacred drops of his sweat fell to the ground.

33 When he returned to his disciples, he consoled them most fairly. The wicked Judas then approached with a great company of the Jews.

34 Jesus, when he saw the Jews, asked them (this), what they seek. They answer him all together : “ We seek Jesus the Nazarene.”

35 “ I am that one,” thus† said Jesus. All the villains fell down. Three times he asks them it, at all three they fall backward.

36 But the villains, all sweating, have come near towards our Lord ; Judas the traitor makes a sign : “ Take him whom I shall kiss.”

37 Judas, when he came to Jesus, at once holds out to him his chin ; Jesus the good did not refuse it, he gave a kiss to the traitor.

38 “ Friend,” thus said Jesus the good, “ why betrayest thou me with thy kiss ? Better it had been for thee [that] thou hadst not been born, than that thou shouldst betray me through avarice.”

39 Armed they stood around ; from all sides they seized Jesus ; he did not defend himself nor did he resist ; he goes to death like a lamb.

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\*MS. *n*, i.e. *en*—Latin *inde*.

†*properly*: this.



40 Saint Peter alone wishes to avenge him; he drew out the sword which he had at his side, and pursued a wicked servant [and] struck off his right ear.

41 Jesus the good renders good for evil; he straightway healed the servant's ear. Hands bound like a robber, so they lead him away to [his] passion.

42 Then his disciples forsook him, as he had told them before; saint Peter alone goes following him, for he wished to see his end.

43 Annas the Jews called him to whom Jesus was led. Then the villains assembled themselves; they came near Jesus to see [him].

44 However much they seek the crime, how they might slay Jesus, it was not found nor discovered, for he did no crime.

45 The high priest stood before him, and adjured him by God himself that he should tell them with absolute fidelity if he is true Jesus, son of God.

46 "Thou thyself hast said it," answers Jesus. All the villains shout together: "What do we seek in him [as] a greater crime? By himself we have heard it."

47 Then they covered his sacred eyes; villains seized him to bind [him]; above all they mocked him: "Tell us, prophet, who struck thee this [blow]."

48 Outside in the vestibule stood Peter; the door-keeper saw him at the fire; with his talk he frightens him [so] that he makes him deny the son of God.

49 Before the cock crew in the night, a third time Peter denied him. Jesus the good looked at him, [and] makes him remember it\* at once.

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\*read *recognostre'l* for MS. *recognostret*.



50 Peter then went out [and] wept very bitterly. God allowed himself to be denied for this [cause], that he might have pity on us.

51 When the morning was light, they led him away before Pilate; they go accusing him vehemently, asking for his death loudly.

52 Pilate sent him to Herod, to whom he [Pilate] formerly wished ill; on that day of Jesus Christ's passion they both reconciled themselves.

53 When the wicked Herod saw him, he became at once right glad thereof; he has for a long time heard much of him; he thought at once [that] he would perform miracles.

54 He called upon him in many ways; Jesus the good did not utter a word; the Jews accuse him, he was silent; he did not deign to reply to one [of them].

55 Then on that day the wicked Herod reviled him and derided him; he put on him a white robe, he sent him back to Pilate.

56 Pilate, who wished rather to let him go,—the wicked Jews do not permit him; they grant the robber life; “Kill, kill Jesus,” they cry.

57 They grant Barabbas life; they nailed Jesus to a high cross. “Crucify, crucify, Pilate,” they all cry together.

58 “How shall I kill your king?” thus said Pilate; “he did no wrong; I will cause him to be beaten and scourged, [and] afterwards I will let him go.

59 All the villains cry together—even to heaven the voices go—“If thou lettest Jesus live, thou art not the emperor's friend.”

60 Pilate then washed his hands, that he may disown\* his death; together all the Jews cry: "All the sin be upon us!"

61 Pilate, when he heard such words, (then) abandoned our Lord to them; then the villains receive him, forth they lead him into the courtyard.

62 With purple then they clothed him and put a reed in his hand; villains take a crown of thorns and set it on his head.

63 All the villains bend down on knees before him; then they salute him as lord, and, in derision, emperor.

64 And when they have derided him enough, (then) they put on him his clothing, and he himself took his cross; in front of all he goes to [his] passion.

65 Women go following him behind, weeping they go and bewailing him; Jesus the pitiful looked† back, [and] began to speak to the women:

66 "Hear, daughters of Jerusalem, for me there is no need for you to weep; but for you and your daughters weep much, for there is need for you."

67 When he arrived at Golgotha, before the gate of the city, (then) he surrendered to them his tunic, which was fashioned without seam.

68 They durst not rend it, but did cast lots [as to] who shall have it.‡ His vesture was not divided; that was a great token in very truth.§

\*deny himself of.

†read *gardet* for MS. *garder*. ‡read *qui l'avra* for MS. *avra*. §all for true.



69 In one faith, one truth, all his disciples ought to stand ; his kingdom is not divided, in charity it is all united.

70 And concerning the villains of whom I told you before, I must come [back] there where I left off. For they mix the gall with wine, [and] they offer it to our Lord.

71 When they have lifted him up on the cross, they hang two robbers at his sides : between these two they hang Jesus ; this they do all in contempt.

72 When they have put him up on the cross, they make great mocking, great shouting ; above all one of the robbers, (he) derided king Jesus.

73 The other replied : “ Thou sayest ill in that. He dies wrongly ; he did nothing wrong ; but we are rightly through great offences to-day in these torments.

74 Towards Jesus he turned his eyes and piously called upon him : “ Remember me in thy mercy, when thou shalt come in thy kingdom, [O] Christ.”

75 The good one, who did not lie, who in death itself was still pitiful, replied : “ This I promise thee, this very day\* thou shalt come with me into paradise.”

76 O God, true king, Jesus Christ, who makest such a gift in thy mercy, who through one confession givest life to the thief ;

77 We praise thee both night and day. On us have true mercy ; do thou pardon us those sins which thou sawest in us, by thy pity.†

78 Until none [i.e. the ninth hour] from midday, deep night covered all this world ; the sun fled and the moon fled, after God's son was lifted up‡.

\*to-day on this day.

†*tua pietas* ; cf. *toue mercit*, Alexis lvii, and *la soue pietet*, lxiii. ‡hung.



79 When it came to none itself, [then] Jesus uttered loud cries; in Hebrew he spoke it loud: "Heli, heli, why hast thou forsaken me?"

80 One of the villains who stands there offers the vinegar to him up on the cross. Jesus then cried out loud; the spirit went out of him.

81 When the soul went out of Jesus the earth quaked so violently [that] rocks split\*, mountains fall, [and] many graves of saints opened.

82 And many bodies of saints have issued forth, and are seen among all. The curtain which hangs in the temple of God is rent through the middle even to the ground.

83 At the side of the cross stood Mary, from whom Jesus took true flesh; when she saw that flesh dying, what grief she had, no man alive knows (it).

84 She can very well remember how God was born of her flesh. Though she saw him die thus, he will rise again, that she knows indeed.

85 But nevertheless great was the grief that pierced through her heart; no mortal man can imagine it; saint Simeon had predicted it†.

86 Joseph begged Pilate much that he would give him the body of Jesus. With great reverence he took it away, [and] wrapt it in his winding-sheets.

87 Nicodemus on the other hand brought thither much ointment; with myrrh and aloes, he has given about one hundred pounds.

88 With great reverence they embalm him duly with these spices; then they lay him in the tomb where body had never yet lain.

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\**fendient*, miswriting for *fendirent*.

†tread *lot*, i.e. *l'ot*, for MS. *loi*.

89 His mother was a virgin, and bore him without sin; his grave was all new, before him no man had ever lain therein.

90 Still it was not enough for the villains; before Pilate they all go: "We pray thee, of thy grace, place guards there [that] he be not taken away.

91 "For he said (this) that he will rise again and on the third day appear alive; his disciples will have taken him away,\* [and] will say to all that he has risen again.

92 We have had great deceptions from them; now we shall have much† greater." He then gave them armed soldiers, [and] committed the tomb to them.

93 Christ Jesus, who is true God, who ever was and ever is, although his body‡ was slain, reigned nevertheless as he had done§ before.

94 For he then assailed hell, [and] there vanquished mighty Satan. By his death he has so vanquished him that he has not power against man.

95 Here was the first man [i.e. Adam] and his children, through his sin, both small and great were here for many years;

96 For never before was there any mortal man [that] had gone into this hell, until he came who, without sin, fulfilled the common law for all.

97 Neither silver nor gold did he give them, only his blood and his flesh; from that hell he delivered us all, [and] he sheltered them in paradise.

98 And on the third day in the bright morning, when the sun was lit up, three women go to the tomb, [and] brought very precious ointments.

---

\*read *emblat* for MS. *emblar*. †adverbial use of the noun *pece*; 'by a great deal.' ‡read *charns* 'flesh.' §*se* is untranslatable.



99 The angel of God comes down from heaven and comes near to the tomb; he has a countenance like burning fire and clothes like the white snow.

100 As soon as the guards saw him, they were so amazed with fear that almost dead they fell\* to earth for great fear that came upon them.

101 Up on the stone the angel sat, and spoke to the women, [and] said: "[For] you†, [there is] nothing here for which you may fear‡, who truly seek Jesus Christ.

102 "He has gone forth and is not here; he has fulfilled all whatsoever he told you. Come and see the empty place where his body lay before.

103 "Proclaim everything to his disciples, but do not herein forget Peter. He goes hence before you into Galilee, there they will see him, where he told them."

104 When they turned from thence, Jesus straightway met them; then they recognize the Lord, and worship him as redeemer.

105 Our Lord on that same day was seen five times; first [there] saw him saint Mary, out of whom he sent seven devils.

106 Afterwards those two [women] saw him when they came away from the tomb; Peter saw him on that same day, spoke with him, and received him gladly.

107 Towards evening, towards night, (then) his disciples saw him again; he entered with them the town of Emmaus, and supped together with them.

108 Now his disciples are assembled, now they all say that he was alive; while they held such converse, Jesus stood in the midst of [them] all.

\*came. †or read *no'st*, i.e. *non est*.

‡MS. *crement*, miswriting for *cremet* (normal French form *cremeiz*—Latin *tremitis*).



109 "Peace be to you!" he said to all, "I am Jesus, who have suffered; see my hands, see my feet, see my side, in which I was wounded."

110 They are exceedingly amazed; they do not believe of him\* that he has flesh; they think (this) that his spirit appeared among them.

111 Honey and fish he ate there, [and] strengthened them in the truth; broiled fish [betokens] his passion and the honey betokens godhead.

112 Some account I have given you† [as to] what Jesus did through [his] passion; all I cannot fully relate (it) to you, nor can any man born of mother [relate] it.

113 To his disciples [for] forty days he showed himself alive‡ by many appearances; he drank and ate together with them, [and] continually spoke of the kingdom of God.

114 And through this world he bade them§ go [and] baptize all into Trinity; those will be safe who shall believe him, [those] who shall not believe him shall be damned.

115 His disciples will do miracles such as he before was wont to do, they will speak new languages and will drive away devils.

116 If any of them drink poison, he will not have harm, that I know for truth; they will lay hands on sick folk and will restore health to all.

117 Up into a mountain he then ascended, which I have named Olivet to you; he raised his hand and blessed them§; the cloud came and gathered him up.

\**li* is properly dative. †Something I have told you of discourse.

‡Lücking supplies *se monstret vifs*. §read *ls* for MS. *l*.

118 And they see him\*\* ascended into heaven. On the right hand of God Jesus seats himself, who will come to judge [us] all, [and] will render to all both good and evil.

119 His disciples went away. As soon as it came to the tenth day, the Holy Ghost falls upon them—from that they call the day Pentecost—, and inflamed them as a burning fire.

120 Before, they are shut up\*; they know not [how] to speak a word concerning Christ. As soon as power came from heaven, they do not fear any of the Jews†.

121 They go about speaking in all languages, they go proclaiming the miracles of Christ. No man living can withstand them; they work wonders with power.

122 They are spread through all this world; they announce the kingdom of God everywhere; they convert nation and people; Christ Jesus is everywhere with them.

123 Satan has great grief thereat; he causes severe afflictions to God's faithful; some he causes (them) to be raised up on crosses, some to be beheaded with swords.

124 And some he causes to be flayed, some to be cast alive into fire, and [some] he causes (them) to be roasted on a grill, some to be stoned with stones.

125 What does it help him? He will not overcome them; the worse he treats them, the more they increase‡. Christ has strengthened his head, through all this world he is adored.

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\*\*read *lo* for MS. *lor*.

\*i.e. do not go abroad. †any Jew.

‡How worse\he does to them, they increase more.



126 We do not have these contests ; we must fight against ourselves ; we must break our wills, that we may have [our] part with God's faithful.

127 For the end of the world is not very far-off, and the kingdom of God is very near ; as long as it is permitted to us, let us do good, [and] let us abandon the world and its sin.

128 Christ Jesus who dwellest above, have mercy on sinners ; if they have misdona in such ways, in thy pity pardon them.

129 May I give thanks to thee before thy father's glory ! May I praise the Holy Ghost both now and for evermore. Amen.



## THE LIFE OF SAINT LEGER.

1 We ought to praise the Lord God and do honour to his saints. In love of him we sing of the saints who bore for him great afflictions. And now it is time and it is well that we sing of saint Leger.

2 First I shall tell you of the honours that he had with two lords. After I will tell you of the sufferings that his body endured [which were] so great, and [of] Ebroin, that traitor to God, who slew him with great torture.

3 When he was a child, (then) at that time his parents took him to the king, who (then) reigned at that time. That was Lothair, son of Baldequin. He loved him, desired him for God [and] bade that he should learn letters\*.

4 That king Lothair committed him to Didon, the bishop of Poitiers. He received him [and] treated him very well. He placed him at once with a tutor who taught him well of that knowledge with which he served† God loyally‡.

5 And when he had taught him of that art, he gave him back [to him] who committed him to him. He received him [and] brought him up well§. It was a long time [that] he kept him (for himself) with him. God, whom he served, exalted him. He became abbot of St Maixent.

6 There was no man of his age\*\* who was better (then) at that time. Perfect he was in charity; he had great faithfulness and truth, and in discourse held fair words. Humility he had towards all.

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\*i.e. be educated. †read *serueit* for MS. *seruier*. ‡in good faith.

§read *nodrit* (—Latin *nutrivit*) for MS. *nonrit*. \*\*youth.

7 It ever was and so shall be [that] he who does good shall be praised for it. And saint Leger was ever good, [and] always did well what he could. He was praised in the presence of the king; when he [the king] heard it, it was pleasing† to him.

8 He sent for him [to come] to him, and this he said to him, [that] he should be at court [and] should continually serve him. He exalted him and honoured him. He granted him his favour, and ever treated him so well that he made him‡ bishop of Autun.

9 As long as that king Lothair lived, saint Leger was well honoured. He died; great loss was therein. The Frankish barons resolved on this—because he was of good faith—[that] they would make (of) Chilperic king.

10 A count there was [who] began the quarrel; that same was named§ Ebroin. He did not wish to receive Chilperic, but his brother Theodric. None of his peers accepted it; they wish to make a king against his wish.

11 They all took him to counsel; they made a king against his wish; and Ebroin had thereof great grief because he could not overcome them. Because of that great\*\* grief he begged to be made a priest and entered into a monastery.

12 King Chilperic treated him so well [that] he made (of) saint Leger a counsellor. As long as he acted according to his [saint Leger's] advice he kept himself well towards God; he granted law, and observed [it], and ruled his kingdom well.

†loved. ‡The repetition of *en fist* in the MS. probably indicates some corruption.

§had name. \*\*that such.



13 There was a certain man, an enemy of God, who accused him [saint Leger] to Chilperic. His\* wrath was great as [that] of a lord, and saint Leger had fear thereof in himself. Although he knew it, he concealed it well; to no man did he reveal it.

14 When that wrath became so great, it was Easter at that same time, and saint Leger performed his service; he sang mass and did it right well; he communicated the people and† the king, and without leave-taking he went away.

15 King Chilperic, when he heard it, took his messengers, sent them‡ to him, [and] sent word to him (this) that he should return; he would have his pardon for everything. And saint Leger was not conscious of having done wrong§; when he saw the messenger, he went back to him [Chilperic].

16 Thus he said and assured him: "Thy counsellor I will no longer be. It is not lawful for me to hold my bishopric for thee who ever wished me to have [it]. Let me enter into a monastery, since I cannot remain where I wished."

17 Unwillingly he [Chilperic] did it, not willingly. He let him go into a monastery; it was Lisieux where he entered. He found [there] the priest Ebroin. This Ebroin wished him much ill, wholly through envy, not for anything else.

18 And saint Leger did his duty [and] began to upbraid Ebroin. That great wrath and that anger—he entreated him [that] he would forsake it entirely, [and that] it should be to him for the sake of God and not for him\*\*. This he begged him, [that] he would make peace with him.

\*the. †read *poble et* for MS. *poblent*. ‡s for *ls*. §did not know wrong in himself (*s*).

\*\*MS. *fus...fus*; some read *fist...fist* [that] he should do it for God and not (do it) for him.



19 And Ebroin made a pretended peace. He showed him that he would be at peace so long as he was in that monastery; he showed him (this) that he was a friend to him. But henceforth you will hear (this) how he acted towards him in bad faith.

20 King Chilperic, he died. All knew it throughout the kingdom. Their relatives and friends came, those of saint Leger [and] those of Ebroin; they urge (this) on both that they should return to their lands\*.

21 And saint Leger then did well, who returned to his bishopric; and Ebroin then did ill, who then became accursed. His head which he tonsured, he allowed it all to grow again.

22 Thereupon† he forsook the Lord God, and gave himself over to the devil. Whoever‡ was evil and came to him, he at once willingly received him. When he had collected a great multitude, he began to lay waste the kingdom.

23 With fire, with flame, he goes burning and destroying with swords. He does as much evil as he can; [as] for God, he does not wish to regard him. He was not alive [who was] born of mother, that had seen such an army.

24 At Autun, in that city, he comes to attack lord saint Leger. He could not enter into the city; he besieged it outside, [and] did great evil there. And saint Leger was very sad thereof, for such evil as he saw without.

25 He took his priests, vested [them], and with his crosses issued forth. For this he went forth§ [that] he wished to entreat him [Ebroin] that he would

\*i.e. homes. †read *iluoc* for MS. *ilcio*. ‡read *qui* for MS. *quar*.

§n; cf. Passion 30.

forsake all that evil for God's sake. This Ebroin, when he saw him, bade him be taken [and] caused him to be bound.

26 Now you will hear the great torments that the tyrant caused him, so cruel was the traitor. He causes his eyes to be gouged out of his head. When he had done this, he put him in prison, nor did anyone know what had become of him.

27 He caused both his lips to be cut off, then the tongue that he had in his head. When he had all mutilated him, Ebroin said, who was so evil: "Now he has lost [the power of] speaking to the Lord God\*. No more will he be able to praise God."

28 He lay on the ground, was greatly tormented, [and] had not† [any] with him who cared‡ for him. He cannot stand upon his feet, for he has entirely lost them. Now he has lost [the power of] speaking to the Lord God\*. No longer will he be able to praise God.

29 If he has not a tongue to speak, God heard his thoughts; and if he has not fleshly eyes, still he has spiritual ones; and, if in [his] body he has great torment, the soul will have consolation for it.

30 Guenin was the name of him to whom§ he entrusted him. He led him away down into prison, and in Fécamp, in that monastery, there they shut up saint Leger. The Lord God in that affliction visited Leger his servant.

31 He restored him his lips; just as before he began to praise God; and ever he had so great pity on him [that] he made him speak as before. Then began Leger to preach; he made the people believe in God.

\*Some interpret *dondeu porlier* 'gift of speaking to God.'

†or 'there was not' (*oct*, i.e. *aut* 'il y avait').

‡to whom it was hot, i.e. was a burning matter.

§Guenin had [he] name to whom.



32 And Ebroin, as soon as he heard of it, could not believe it until he saw it. When he saw it, he was angry. Then he held hard words with him, and the body\* of the tyrant was inflamed [with anger]; he promised him worse in the future.

33 In great rage, he committed him to Hlodobert for great punishment. He bade him night and day that he should do him ill as long as he lived. This Hlodobert was a good man and took saint Leger to his house.

34 He desired to do him much kindness; he bade drink be brought to him. He looked and saw a great brightness; from heaven it came; it was from God, and is great like an aurora in the sky, and is burning bright like a flame.

35 This Hlodobert, when he saw it, turned to the others and said to them: "This is such a man as† God greatly loves, for whom such a thing comes from heaven." For such tokens as these which they saw‡, they began to praise God greatly.

36 All the men of that country, they all began to come, and saint Leger preaches to them. He won them for the Lord God, [and] gave [them] that spiritual fruit which God has bestowed on him.

37 And Ebroinus, when he heard of it, could not believe it until he saw it. That good that he did, it was grievous to him; he commanded him to be killed. He sent four men armed to him, who should go and behead him.

38 The three came to saint Leger, threw themselves down at his feet; of their sins that they had done he absolved and pardoned them. The fourth,

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\*so MS. *corps*; but perhaps read *cuor* 'heart.' †so MS. *ciest omne tiel* 'this man such;' but perhaps read *cest omne ciel* 'this man, him.' ‡for those tokens which they saw such.

a villain—his name is Vadart—with a sword beheaded him.

39 And when he had removed his head, the body stood upon its feet ; it was a long time before it fell\*. He who had struck him came near to him ; then he cut off his feet below ; the body still stood upright.

40 Of the body ye have heard enough and of the torments that it bore [which were] great. The Lord God received† the soul ; to the other saints in heaven it goes. May he help us with that Lord for whom he bore such sufferings !

*Finit, fnit, fnit,  
ludendo dicit.‡*

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\*that it did not fall. †read *reciut*, for MS. *reciunt*.

‡“ Ce cri de joie du copiste enchanté d’avoir achevé une tâche ennuyeuse ” (Gaston Paris).



## THE LIFE OF SAINT ALEXIS.

Here begins a pleasant song and spiritual discourse of that noble baron, Eufemian by name, and of the life of his blessed son, of whom we have heard read and sing. By the divine will, he [Eufemian], very desirous, begot that only son. After his birth he was a child beloved of God himself and brought up by father and by mother with great affection. His youth was honourable and religious. In the friendship of sovereign pity he committed his young wife to the living spouse of truth, who is one only creator and reigns in Trinity. This story is pleasant grace and sovereign consolation to all spiritual minds, who love purely according to chastity and are worthily delighted in the joys of heaven and in virginal nuptials\*.

### I.

The world was good in the time of them of old, for in it was faith and justice and love, and there was belief, of which there is now no store. It [the world] is all changed, it has lost its colour; it will never be such as it was with them of old.

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In the footnotes: L denotes the Lamspringen (Hildesheim) MS., A the Ashburnham MS., P the Paris MS., Pa. the readings of Gaston Paris.

\*The introduction is found only in L.

## II.

In the time of Noah and in the time of Abraham and in the [time of] David, whom God loved greatly, the world was good; never will it be so glorious. It is old and weak; it continues to decline\*; it has become worse so that all good continues to fail.

## III.

After the time that God came to save us [and] our ancestors had got christianity, there was a lord of Rome the city. A mighty man he was, of high rank. I tell it you for this [reason that] I wish to speak of a son of his.

## IV.

Eufemian, so was the father named†, was a knight of Rome, of the best that there then were. Above all his peers the emperor loved him. Then took he a wife worthy and honoured, of the most noble of all the land.

## V.

Then they lived together a long while. That they had no child is a great grief to them‡; they both call mightily upon God (for it): "O heavenly king, by thy command give us a child that shall be according to thy desire!"

## VI.

So much they prayed with great humility that he gave the woman fertility. He gives them a son, and they were grateful to him for it. They made him to

\*goes declining; *declinant* A P; *remanent* L, from the next line.

†so had the father to name. ‡weighs upon them.



be regenerate by holy baptism ; a fair name they laid upon him according to\* christian law.

## VII.

He was baptized and received the name of Alexis. [She] who had borne him brought him up with good will† ; then the good father put him to school. So well he took to learning that he was well furnished therewith. Then the child goes to serve the emperor.

## VIII.

When the father sees that he will have no other child, save him alone whom he loved greatly, [then] he bethinks him of the time to come. Now he desires that he [Alexis] shall take a wife in his own lifetime : so he acquires for him the daughter of a noble knight.

## IX.

The maiden was of very high lineage, daughter to a knight of Rome the city : he has no other child ; he desires to do her honour. Together the two fathers go to speak of it ; they wish to bring their two children together.

## X.

They name the date of their union§. When it came to performing it, they (then) perform it fittingly. Master Alexis married her duly, but it was such a contract as he in no way desired\*\* ; he has his desire [directed] entirely to God.

\**selunc* A P.

†*uolentiers le nurri* A P ; *suef le fist nurrir* L ‘graciously caused him to be brought up.’ ‡*noble* is the noun, *franc* the adjective.

§*asemblement* A P ; *aisement* L ‘pleasure.’

\*\*of which he desired nothing.

## XI.

When the day is passed and it had come to night, thus spoke the father: "Son, go\* and sleep with thy wife, according to the command of [the] God of heaven." The son did not wish to anger his father; he goes to the bedchamber with his gracious wife.

## XII.

When he beheld the bed [and] looked upon the maiden, (then) he remembers his heavenly Lord, whom he holds more dear than any earthly thing: "O God!" he said, "so powerful a sin weighs me down! Now do thou not forsake me, [for] I fear greatly lest I may lose thee."

## XIII.

When they were left all alone in the chamber, Master Alexis began to call upon her: he began greatly to condemn earthly life, [and] showed her the truth of the heavenly; but he longed that he might depart thence.

## XIV.

"Dost thou hear me, maiden? Take him to spouse who redeemed us by his precious blood. In this world there is no perfect love. Life is frail, there is no lasting honour; this joyfulness turns to great sadness."

## XV.

When he has shown her his intent, he then commits to her the baldric of his sword and a ring where-

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\**Quer* (—Latin *quare*) serves to introduce the imperative.



with he had wedded her. Then he goes forth\* from the chamber of his father: at midnight he flees from the country.

## XVI.

Then he came journeying straight to the sea: the ship is ready into which he was to enter. He pays his fare and is bestowed within. They set their sail and put out† to sea; they landed‡ where God willed to grant them.

## XVII.

Right at Lalice [i.e. Laodicea],—it was a most fair city—there the bark comes to shore safely. Then went forth Master Alexis to land; but how long he dwells there that I know not: wherever he is, he does not cease to serve God.

## XVIII.

Then he went away to§ Alsis [i.e. Edessa] the city for the sake of an image of which he heard tell, which angels made by God's command in honour of the virgin who brought salvation, holy Mary, who bore the Lord God.

## XIX.

All his possessions that he has brought with him, he distributes them all, so that nothing thereof was left to him. Through Alsis the city he gave generous alms to the poor wherever he can find them. He did not wish to be burdened on account of any possessions\*\*.

\**Dunc en ist fors* Pa.; *dunc en eissit* L 'went forth'; *dunc sen ist fors* P; *puis ist fors* A (unmetrical).

†let run. ‡took land. §*dunc sen alad* A; *diloc alat* L 'thence he went.'

\*\**pur nul auer* L.

## XX.

When he has distributed all his possessions, Master Alexis sat amongst the poor, [and] received alms when God conveyed it to him. He keeps\* as much of it as he needs to preserve† his body; if any of it remains to him, he gives it to the poor.

## XXI.

Now I will return to the father and the mother, and the wife who was left all alone‡. When they knew (it) that he had fled, it was great mourning that they made for it and great lamentation throughout the land.

## XXII.

Thus spake the father: "Dear son, how I have lost thee!" The mother answers: "Wretched [me]! What has become of him?" Thus said the wife: "Sin has taken him from me. [My] love, fair lord, so short a time have I had you! Now I am as sad as I can be."§

## XXIII.

Then the father takes [some] of his best officers: through many lands he makes search for his child. Even to Alsis two came journeying. There they found Master Alexis sitting; but they knew not his face or his form.

## XXIV.

The child's tender flesh had so much changed\*\* [that] his father's two officers did not recognize him. To him himself they gave alms: he took it like the

\**retient* Pa.; *retint* L; *receit* A, *recut* P. †so much with which he can protect. ‡*qui sole fu remese* P; *qued il out espusethe* L 'whom he had married.'

§so sad that I cannot be more [sad]. \*\*The child had his tender flesh so changed.



other brethren. They did not recognize him [and] anon they returned.

## XXV.

They did not recognize him nor did they distinguish him. Master Alexis praises [the] God of heaven for these his servants whose pensioner he is. He was their lord, now he is their dependent: I cannot tell you how glad he made\* himself for it.

## XXVI.

These return home to Rome the city, [and] relate to the father that they could not find him. One may well believe that he was sad†. The good mother began to be woe-begone and constantly to bewail her dear son.

## XXVII.

“Son Alexis, why did thy mother bear thee?‡ Thou hast fled me, [and] I am left lamenting. I know not the place nor (I know not) the land where I should go and seek thee: I am quite demented. I shall never be happy, dear son, nor will thy father be.”§

## XXVIII.

She came into the bedchamber full of grief, and it grieves her that nothing there remained: there remained neither garment nor any ornament. To such sorrow did she turn her thought [that] never after that day did she comfort herself with gladness.

\**fret* L—Latin *fecerat*.

†If he was sad it is not necessary to ask it. ‡*por queit* Pa.

§so Pa., from L and P; *ia mais niert liez tis pere ne ta mere* A ‘never will thy father nor thy mother be happy.’

## XXIX.

“Bedchamber,” she said, “thou shalt never be adorned, nor shall joy be made in thee!” She destroyed it as if an army had pillaged it\*; she has sackcloth hung there and ragged hangings; she changed its great dignity to great mourning.

## XXX.

With grief the mother sat down on the ground, [and] thus the wife of Master Alexis spoke indeed: “Lady,” said she, “I have had so great a loss! Henceforth I shall live like a turtle-dove: since I have not thy son, I will stay along with thee.”

## XXXI.

The mother answers†: “If thou wilt remain with me, I will so keep thee for love of Alexis [that] thou shalt never have ill that I can protect thee from. Let us bewail together the grief for our love,—thou [wilt do it] for thy spouse, I shall do it for my son.”

## XXXII.

It cannot be otherwise [than that] they should set him in‡ their thought; nevermore can they forget the sorrow. Master Alexis in Alsie the city serves his Lord with good intent: his enemy can in no way deceive him§.

## XXXIII.

Seventeen years—nor was there aught to say\*\*—he tortured his body in the service of the Lord God: for

\**com s'ost l'oust predede* Pa., *ost* from *host* L; *cum hum (sel) laust preee* A P. †*so* A P; *co di la medre* L ‘this said the mother.’ ‡*metent l'el* Pa. §*puet onc enjaner* Pa.

\*\*i.e. nothing was lacking.



friendship neither of man nor woman friend, nor for dignities that might be conferred upon him, is he willing to turn therefrom as long as he is alive\*.

## XXXIV.

When he has so strengthened† his whole mind that he will never voluntarily‡ go out of the city, God made the image for love of him speak to the server who served at the altar. Thus he bade him: "Call the man of God."

## XXXV.

Thus said the image: "Cause the man of God to come; for he has served God well and pleasingly,§ and he is worthy to enter into paradise." He [the server] goes, and seeks him, but he knows not how to find him, that holy man of whom the image spoke.

## XXXVI.

The sacristan returned to the image in the church: "Truly," said he, "I do not know whom to speak to." The image replied: "That is he who sits behind the door. He is close to God and to the kingdom of heaven: in no wise will he depart therefrom."

## XXXVII.

He [the sacristan] goes, and seeks him, [and] brings him to the minster. Behold\*\* the proof, throughout the land, that that image spoke for Alexis. All honoured him, great and small, and all beg him that he will have mercy on them.

\*has to live. †*afermet* L; *aturne* A P 'directed.'

‡*adverbial phrase*: by his will.

§so L. \*\**Es vos* Pa. 'Lo to you'; *est unus* L.

## XXXVIII.

When he sees (this) that they desire to honour him : “ Assuredly,” said he, “ I shall no longer stay\* here ; I do not wish again to encumber myself with this honour.” At midnight† he escapes from the city ; he takes his way‡ straight to Lalice.

## XXXIX.

Master Alexis entered into a ship : they got their wind, they put out to sea. He hopes to land just at Tarsus, but it cannot be. He must go elsewhere : the storm carries them straight to Rome.

## XL.

At one of the ports which is near Rome, (there) the ship puts in with that holy man. When he sees his country, he fears most mightily as to his parents, lest they should recognize him and load him with worldly honour.

## XLI.

“ O God !” he said, “ fair king, who rulest all, so it pleased thee, I would not be here. If now my parents of this§ land recognize me, they will take me by entreaty or by force : if I trust them therein, they will draw me to destruction.

## XLII.

“ And yet my father longs for me. So does my mother more than any woman alive\*\*, with my wife

\*I have not more to remain. †*En mie nuit* Pa. ; *ensur[e] nuit* L ‘at night.’ ‡*rejoint li sons edrers* Pa. ‘his journey reaches.’

§*deste* P, i.e. *d’este* ; *dicesta* L (unmetrical). \*\*that lives.



whom I abandoned to them. Now I will in spite of all\* place myself in their power. They will not recognize me, so many days is it since they saw me†.

## XLIII.

He leaves the ship and goes journeying to Rome. He goes through the streets with which he was once acquainted, one after another; moreover he meets his father there, [and] together with him a great company of his men. He recognized him [and] calls him by his right name.

## XLIV.

“Eufemian, good lord, man of might, shelter me for God’s sake in thy house: make me a pallet under thy staircase for love of thy son for whom thou hast sorrow. I am quite weak; wherefore for his love give me to eat‡.”

## XLV.

When the father heard his son’s cry, his eyes shed tears, nor can he abstain from it: “For love of God and for my dear beloved one I will give thee all, good man, whatsoever thou hast sought of me, bed and lodging and bread and meat and wine.

## XLVI.

“O God,” said he, “would§ that I had a servant who would guard him for me! I would make him free for it.” One there was who at once came forward: “Here am I,” said he, “who will guard\*\* him at thy command; for thy love I will endure the trouble of it.”

\*I shall not fail; *ne laier (que) ne* with subjunctive = modern French *ne pas laisser (que) de* with infinitive. †that they did not see me; *nem* Pa. ‘not me.’

‡*sim pais* L, —Latin *sic me pasce* ‘so feed me.’

§*quer* introduces a wish here as it does a command in XLIV.

\*\**guart* is present tense

## XLVII.

He led him forthwith beneath the staircase, makes him his bed where he can rest, [and] prepares for him everything whatsoever he had need of\*. He does not wish to behave amiss towards his† lord; in no way can one blame him for it.

## XLVIII.

Often the father and the mother saw him [Alexis], and the maiden whom he had married. In no way did they ever recognize him. Neither did he tell them, nor did they ask (it), what man he was nor of what country he was.

## XLIX.

Oftentimes he sees them make great grief, and weep most tenderly with their eyes, entirely for him, never at all for aught else‡. He beholds them and puts it in his thought; he is not concerned at seeing it, he is so turned to God.§

## L.

Under the staircase where he lies on his mat, there they feed [him] with the remains of the table. In great poverty he kept his high rank\*\*: he does not wish (this) that his mother should know it. He loves God more than all his family.

## LI.

Of the meat that comes to him from the house, he

\*need was for him. †*vers* *sun* A P; *contra* L. ‡ever nothing for other thing (vulgar Latin *alid*, for *aliud*).

§*N'at soing quel veiet* ('he has not care that he should see it'), *si est a Deu tornez* Pa.

\*\**parage* L; *barnage* P.



keeps as much as his body needs for sustenance\*. If any of it remains (to him), he gives it to the almsmen; he does not make a store to fatten his body, but gives it to the poorest to eat.

## LII.

In holy church he sojourns willingly; every feast-day he communicates†. Holy scripture (it) was his counsellor; it bids him be strong‡ in God's service; in no wise does he desire to depart therefrom.

## LIII.

Under the staircase where he lies and lives, there he leads joyfully his [life of] poverty. His father's servants who serve the household throw their slops upon his head; he does not get angry about it nor does he accuse them for it.

## LIV.

They all deride him, and they hold him for a madman: they throw water on him and make his bed§ wet. This most holy man is not at all angry thereat, but prays God that he may pardon them in his mercy, for they know not what they do.

## LV.

There he lives thus seventeen years; nor did any relative of his recognize him; nor did any man know his sufferings, except only the bed where he has lain so long: he cannot help its being\*\* apparent.

\*so much of it he keeps with which he sustains his body therewith.

†has himself communicated. ‡*le roue[t] esforcer* P.

§*licun* P (—vulgar Latin *lectionem*); *lincol* L (—Latin *linteolum*) 'linen.' \*\*he cannot change [that] it be not.

## LVI.

Thirty-four years he has so afflicted his body. God desires to reward him for his service: his weakness weighs much upon him; now he knows well that he must depart: he has called to him that servant of his.

## LVII.

“Find me, fair brother, ink and paper and a pen, this I beg, of thy goodwill.”\* He brings [them] to him, [and] Alexis takes them†. By himself he wrote the whole writing, how he went away‡ and how he returned.

## LVIII.

He kept it by him, and did not wish to reveal it, nor do they recognize him until he has gone. He has fully committed himself to God. His end approaches, his body is oppressed; he ceases to speak altogether.

## LIX.

In the week that he was destined to depart [there] came a voice three times in the city outside the sacristy, by the will of God, who has called together all his faithful there: prepared is the glory that he desires to confer on him.

## LX.

With the second voice§ he gives them a second summons, that they seek the man of God who lies in

\**toue mercit*, adverbial phrase (cf. p. 36); *par ta merci* A.

†*les Alexis* Pa. ‡i.e. from home.

§so LP; *A laltre feiz* A ‘at the second time.’



Rome, and entreat him that the city may not go to ruin, nor the people perish\* who dwell\* therein. They who heard it remain in great fear.

## LXI.

Saint Innocent was pope at that time. To him came† both the rich and the poor, and ask of him counsel concerning that thing that they have heard, which much distresses them. They do not wait for the earth to swallow them up‡.

## LXII.

The pope and the emperors,—the one was named Arcadius, the other Honorius—and all the people in common prayer beseech God that he may give them counsel concerning that holy man by whom they will be saved.

## LXIII.

They beseech him that, in his pity,§ he may show them where they can find him. There came a voice which proclaimed to them: “Seek in the house of Eufemian, for there he is, there you will find him.”

## LXIV.

They all betake themselves to lord Eufemian; some begin to blame him severely: “Thou shouldst have declared this thing to us, to all the people who were perplexed. Inasmuch as thou hast concealed it thou hast therein very great wrong.”

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\*L P have the plural *perissent...fregudent*, A the singular *perisse...fregunde*. †*en uindrent* A; *repairent* L ‘repair.’ ‡await the time that the earth should enclose them; *encloe* A; *anglutet* L; *asorbe* P. §*cf. toue mercit* LVII.

## LXV.

He excuses himself\* as one who knows it not ; but they do not believe him : they went to the house. He goes before to prepare the household ; he inquires earnestly about it of all his servants : they reply that not one of them knows of it.

## LXVI.

The pope and the emperors sit on the seats thoughtful and lamenting†, and all those other lords look at them : they beseech‡ God that he may give them counsel concerning that holy man by whom they will be preserved§.

## LXVII.

While they sat there the soul departs from the body of Saint Alexis : right straight it goes to paradise to his Lord whom he had so long served. O heavenly king ! do thou make us come thither !

## LXVIII.

The good servant who attended him voluntarily (he) announced it to his father Eufemian ; softly he calls him and informed him : “ Sire,” said he, “ thy almsman is dead, and this I can say, that he was a good christian.

## LXIX.

“ Very long I have lived with him : assuredly I cannot blame him for any thing, and this is my opin-

\**il sescondit* L P.

†*plurus* L A ; *corocous* P ‘grieved.’ ‡*si preient* L ; *depreient* A P. §*so* L A ; *de cele chose dunt si desiros sunt* ‘of that thing of which they are so desirous’ P.



ion that he is the man of God.” All alone Eufemian went away; he came to his son where he lay under his staircase.

## LXX.

He raises the clothes with which he was covered: he saw the holy man’s face both shining and fair. In his hand the servant of God holds his writing, in which he has written down all his life\*: Eufemian desires to know what it declares.

## LXXI.

He desires to take it: he [Alexis] will not give it up to him. He comes back to the pope quite dumb-founded†: “Now I have found that which we have all sought so long: under my staircase lies a pilgrim dead; he holds a paper, but I cannot take it from him.”

## LXXII.

The pope and the emperors come forward, throw themselves down in prayer‡, put their bodies to great torments: “Mercy, mercy, mercy, most holy man! We knew thee not nor even now do we know thee.

## LXXIII.

“Here before thee stand two sinners, by the grace of God called emperors; it is by his favour that he grants us the honour. We are governors of all this world: we are all in need of thy counsel.

\**ou a escrit trestot le suen conuers* P; not in L.

†*esbahiz* P; *esmeriz* L ‘troubled.’

‡*tietent sei an ureisuns* L (unmetrical); *getent s’ad oreisons* Pa.; *et firent oreisuns* P.

## LXXIV.

“ This pope must protect souls. That is his business to which he has to attend. Give it [the paper] to him\* by thy favour; he will tell us that which he shall find written therein, and God grant (this) that we may now be preserved !”

## LXXV.

The pope stretches out his hand to the paper; Saint Alexis relaxes his [hand] to him: he entrusts it [the paper] to him who was pope of Rome. He does not read it nor does he look within: he offers it† to a good clerk and learned.

## LXXVI.

The chancellor, whose business it was, he read the paper: the others listened to him. He told them the name of that jewel that they found there, [the name] of his father and mother, and told them (this) of what parents he was‡.

## LXXVII.

And he told them (this) how he fled by sea, how he went to Alsis the city, and how God made the image speak for him; and [how] because of the honour with which he wished not to load himself, he fled back to Rome the city.

## LXXVIII.

When the father heard what the paper said, with both hands he rends his <sup>beard</sup> beard: “ Ah, son !” said he;

\**Done li la Pa.; dune (done) li la c(h)artre* L P (unmetrical).

†stretches it forward. ‡*ce lor dist de quieus parenz il ere* P; similarly A; *dicele gemme qued iloc unt truede* L ‘of that jewel which they found there.’



“how sorrowful a message! I expected that thou wouldst return to me alive; that by God’s mercy thou mightest console me.”

## LXXIX.

With loud voice the father began to cry: “Son Alexis, what grief is offered to me! I have kept thee in evil plight\* under my staircase. Ah! wretched [me], sinful [man], how much was I blinded! I have seen thee so often, and yet I could not recognize thee!

## LXXX.

“Son Alexis, [alas] for thy sorrowing mother! Such great pains she has endured for thee, and suffered such hunger and such thirst†, and wept such tears for thy body! This grief to-day will have pierced her heart through.

## LXXXI.

“O son, to whom will fall‡ my great possessions, my broad lands of which I had great store, my great palace in Rome the city? For thy sake, son, I had troubled myself with them: after my death thou wouldst have been dignified with them.

## LXXXII.

“My head is white and my beard is hoary§: I had kept my vast possessions for thee, son\*\*, but thou hadst no regard for them. Such great sorrow has appeared to me to-day! Son, may thy soul be forgiven in heaven!

\*I have done thee evil keeping. *te tantas seis passees* A; *e tantas consireres* L ‘and such cares or thoughts.’

‡so LP; *a cui larrai io* A ‘to whom I shall leave.’

§I have the head white and the beard I have hoary.

\*\**Empor tei, filz* Pa.; the MSS. readings are unmetrical.

## LXXXIII.

“To thee it would be fitting to bear helmet and shield, to gird on a sword like thy (other) peers; thou oughtest to have ruled thy great household (or retinue), to carry the emperor’s pennon, as did thy father and thy ancestors.

## LXXXIV.

“In such grief and in so great poverty, son, hast thou lived in foreign lands! And of that wealth, which should all have been thine, thou tookest little (of it)\* in thy poor lodging. If it had pleased God, thou shouldst have been lord thereof.”

## LXXXV.

Great was the clamour of the grief that the father made, and the mother heard it. She came running there like a woman demented, beating her hands, shrieking, dishevelled; she sees her son dead [and] falls to the ground in a swoon.

## LXXXVI.

Who then saw her make her great lamentation, beat her breast and throw herself† down‡, pull out her hair, and maltreat her face, and kiss and embrace her dead son—there was none so hard [that] he would not have been forced to weep§.

## LXXXVII.

She tears her hair and beats her breast, [and] puts her very flesh to great affliction: “Ah! son,” she

\**Pou en perneies* Pa.; *Ne uousis prendre ainz amas pouerte* P ‘thou wouldst not take but lovedst poverty.’

†her body. ‡*deieter* L; *degeter* P; *degrater* L ‘scratch.’

§*ni out si dur nel estust plurer* A (*ne l’estoust plorer* Pa. ‘it would not be necessary for him to weep.’)



said, "how thou hadst hated me! And I, wretched, how greatly was I blinded! I did not recognize thee [any] more than if I had never seen thee."

## LXXXVIII.

Her eyes weep and she utters loud cries; continually she laments\*: "In an evil day I bore thee, fair son! And why hadst thou not pity on thy mother?† For thee thou sawest me long to die: it is great marvel that pity did not seize thee for it.

## LXXXIX.

"Ah! woeful, wretched [me], what a grievous happening I have heard! Here I see dead my only child‡. My long expectation has come to great sorrow. What shall I be able to do§, sorrowful, ill-starred? It is great marvel that my heart holds out so long!

## XC.

"Son Alexis, thou hadst a very hard heart when thou didst abandon all thy noble lineage! If thou hadst spoken even\*\* once to me alone, thy unhappy mother, thou wouldst thus have revived her, who is so sorrowful! Dear son, thou wouldst have departed happily.

## XCI.

"Son Alexis, [alas] for thy tender body! In what sorrow thou hast spent thy youth! Why didst thou flee from me? I bore thee†† in my womb; and God knows (it) that I am all sorrowful: never more shall I be joyful for man nor for woman.

\**Sempres regretet* Pa.; *apres le regrete* P 'afterwards she laments him.' †*E de ta medre que n'aveies mercit?* Pa.

‡all my bearing. §so AP; *Por quei portai* L 'Why did I bear?' \*\**vels*—Latin *vel* with adverbial *s*.

††*jat* Pa.—*ja te*; *ja* untranslatable.

## XCII.

“ Before I had thee I was very desirous of thee ; before thou wast born I was much distressed thereat ; when I saw thee born, I was glad and joyful thereat ; now I see thee dead, I am grieved thereat ; it weighs upon me that my end so long delays.

## XCIII.

“ Lords of Rome, for the love of God, pity ! Help me to bewail the sorrow for my beloved. Great is the sorrow which has turned upon me ; I cannot contrive\* that my heart may satiate† itself therewith. There is no wonder thereof‡ ; I have no longer daughter nor son.”

## XCIV.

Amidst the grief of the father and the mother came the maiden whom he had wedded : “ [My] lord,” said she, “ what a long delay ! I have awaited thee in thy father’s house, where thou didst leave me lamenting and beside myself.

## XCV.

“ [My] lord Alexis, so many days I have longed for thee, and wept so many tears for thee, looked for thee afar off so many times, [to see] if thou wast returning to console thy wife, and not with faithlessness or weariness.

## XCVI.

“ O dear beloved, [O] for thy fair youth ! It grieves me that it will rot in [the] earth. Ah ! noble

\*do so much. †*sazit*—Latin *satiety*, present subjunctive of *satiare*; *en partist* P ‘should part from him.’

‡*N’en est merveille* Pa.



wight, how sorrowful I must needs\* be! I waited for good tidings of thee, but I now see them so grievous and so evil!

## XCVII.

“O fair mouth, fair face, fair semblance, how changed I see your fair form! I loved you more than any creature. So great a sorrow has come to me to-day [that] it would be† better for me, beloved, that I were dead.

## XCVIII.

“If I had known thee there below under the staircase, where thou hast lain in long illness, even the whole world‡ could not have prevented me from dwelling with thee§; if it had been permitted me, I would have guarded thee.

## XCIX.

“Now am I widowed, [my] lord,” said the maiden: “Never shall I have gladness, for it cannot be. Never on earth shall I have carnal husband. I shall serve God, the king who rules all: he will not fail me, if he sees that I serve him.”

## C.

So much they wept for it, both the father and the mother and the maid, that all were wearied with it. Meanwhile all those lords laid out the sacred body and arranged it fair: how happy those\*\* who honoured him in deed!

\*can.

†come. ‡race, people. §that I should not have dwelt.

\*\**com felix* (Latin) *cels* L; *cume boneures sunt* A.

## CI.

“ Lords, what do ye?” thus said the pope. “What is the use of\* this cry, this lamenting, and this noise? Whoever may grieve, it is for us to rejoice†; for through him we shall have good succour: so let us pray him that he remove us from our ills.”†

## CII.

All seize him who could approach; singing they bear away the body of saint Alexis, and they pray him (this) that he have pity on them. It is not necessary to summon those who have heard it: they all run up, the great and the small.

## CIII.

So all the people of Rome came together; he who could run the quickest got there the soonest§. In the midst of the streets came such great crowds [that] neither king nor lord can make inroad upon them, nor can they pass beyond the sacred body.

## CIV.

Among them these lords begin to speak: “Great is the press: we shall not be able to pass there. For this holy body which God has given to us the people are glad, who have so much desired it: all run hither, no one wishes to go away.”

## CV.

They who rule the empire reply thereto: “Pardon, lords! we seek remedy for it: we will make dis-

\*is worth. †to whomsoever there is grief for our need (or use) it is joy; *a nostros* L (*a nostre ues* Pa.) ‡*que per deu nos asoille* P ‘that he absolve us for God’s sake.’

§Soonest came there who soonest could run there.



tributions of our possessions to the populace\*, then we shall be rid of them.”

## CVI.

Of their treasure they take gold and silver, and they cause it to be thrown before the poor people: by that they think to have riddance [of them]. But it cannot be; they do not ask for any of it [the money]; to that holy body they have turned their desire.

## CVII.

With one voice the people cry out: “For this wealth surely we have no regard. Such great joy has come to us from this holy body [that] we have no care for other help†, for through it we shall have good aid.”

## CVIII.

Never in Rome was there such great joy as was that day to the poor and to the rich because of that holy body which they have in their possession; it is their opinion that they have God himself; all the people praise and thank God.

## CIX.

Saint Alexis had good will‡; wherefore he is honoured to-day. The body lies in Rome the city, and the soul is away within the paradise of God: well can he be happy who is so lodged.

\**la main menude* L, *la gent menue* A P ‘the little (i.e. least important) band of people;’ modern French *le menu peuple*.

†*naum soin daltre mune* A; *que auum ambailide* L ‘which we have got possession of.’ ‡*Mult serui deu de bone uolente* P ‘he served God with great good will.’

## CX.

[He] who has sinned can well remember it: by penitence he can very well save himself. Short is this life; expect a more lasting [one]. Let us beseech the holy Trinity (this) that together with him we may reign in heaven.

## CXI.

Deaf nor blind nor cripple nor leprous, nor dumb nor blind\* nor any paralytic—moreover not any [that is] in pain—there is none of them that goes away suffering, there is not one† that carries back his grief.

## CXII.

There comes not [any] thither ill of any sickness [that], when he calls upon him, does not at once have health. Some walk‡ there, some have themselves carried. Such veritable miracles has God shown them [that] he who went weeping, he makes him go back singing.

## CXIII.

Those two lords who rule the empire, when they see there the miracles so evident, they take him, they carry§ him, and they worship him: partly by entreaty and mostly by force they go forward, and break through the crowd.

## CXIV.

Saint Boniface, whom people call martyr, had in Rome a church very fair. Thither they carry saint

\**ne orbs* L; *ne tors* Brandin 'nor deformed.'

†that one, i.e. such a one.

‡go. §*portent* Pa.; *plorent* L 'bewail.'



Alexis in sooth and duly lay him on the ground\*. Happy the place where his holy body sojourns.

## CXV.

The people of Rome, who have desired him so long, keep him seven days above ground by force. One need not ask whether the throng is great†. From all sides they have so surrounded him that one can scarcely remain there.

## CXVI.

On the seventh day the lodging was made for that holy body, for the heavenly jewel; they withdraw,‡ and the throng gives way; whether they will or no, they let him be laid in the ground; that grieves them, but otherwise it can not be§.

## CXVII.

With censers, with gilt candlesticks, clergy vested in albs and in copes lay the body within the coffin of marble. Some sing there, the greater number shed tears; now, if they had their will\*\*, they would not part with him.

## CXVIII.

With gold and with jewels the coffin was adorned because of that holy body that they are to place in it; in the ground they lay him by main force. The people of Rome the city weep: under the heaven there is no man who can console himself.

\**Trestot souef le poserent a terre* P 'they all laid him gently on the ground.'

†Great is the throng, it needs not to ask it. ‡they draw themselves back (or away). §other thing cannot be.

\*\**adverbial expression*: by their will.

## CXIX.

Now it is not necessary to speak of the father and of the mother and of the wife, how they lamented him; for they all have their voices so harmonized that they all bewailed him and all sorrowed for him: that day there were a hundred thousand tears wept.

## CXX.

They could not longer keep him above ground: whether they will or no, they let him be buried; they bid farewell to the body of Saint Alexis, and pray him that he have pity on them\*, that he be a good advocate for them to his Lord.

## CXXI.

The people depart. And the father and the mother† and the maiden never parted more: together they were until they returned to God. Their fellowship was good and honoured; through that holy man are their souls saved.

## CXXII.

Saint Alexis is in heaven without doubt, along with God, in company with the angels, with the maiden from whom he made himself so strange; now he has her with him; their souls are together: I cannot tell you how great their joy is.

## CXXIII.

What good travail, O God, and what good service that holy man did in this mortal life! For now

\*so L; *E sire pere de nos aies merci* P 'And lord father, have mercy on us.'

†*Vait s'en li pueples. E li pedre e la medre* Pa.



is his soul filled with glory : he has that which he desires for himself, there is nothing thereof to say\* ; moreover also he sees God himself.

## CXXIV.

Miserable ! unhappy ! how weighed down we are ! For (this) we see that we are all out of our senses. We are so blinded by our sins [that] they make us forget the right life : through this holy man we ought to come to a right mind.

## CXXV.

Lordings, let us have this holy man in remembrance, and let us pray to him that he remove us from all evils : in this life may he purchase† for us peace and joy, and in that other the most lasting glory in the Word himself : so say we therefore Pater noster‡.

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\*cf. XXXIII.

†*tacat* L (*achat* Pa.) present subjunctive—Latin *accaptet*, from *accaptare* (whence *acheter*). ‡*en ipse verbe sin dimes pater noster amen* L ; *que la poisum uenir nos donst deus aiutoire* E *encontre deable e ses engins uitoire* P ‘that we may come there God give us help and victory against the devil and his wiles.’



























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